

Affordability Committee Notes

February 27, 2007

Present: Pat Hanberry, Nicole Hoff, Ken Eidel, Sarah Penna, Carol Antoniewicz, Maria Shuck, Helen Monk.
Regrets: Guy Djoken, Irka Fallas, Pat Rosensteel, Phillip Killam, Barbara Martin, Susan Lindstrom

Dental Availability Study:

Nicole will have a final report of her Hood honors study ready by late April. She has met with dentists, Mission of Mercy, consumers, Health Dept. clinic, CAA, etc. to assess the issues. There is a huge unmet need for care. Maria shared a sad story about child who got some dental care in the ER but was in pain for several days later when the referral to dentist did not materialize.

Meetings with Western Maryland and Frederick Delegations:

On February 9, Pat Hanberry, Monica Grant and Carol A. presented information on the uninsured and underinsured in Frederick, Washington, Carroll, Allegany and Garrett Counties. Most lawmakers were very receptive, acknowledged this as an important concern. We were not lobbying for a specific bill, but educating lawmakers on the needs in our area. We did list essential components for any health expansion legislation: \$1 tobacco tax – raises funds, discourages smoking; expanding Medicaid for parents of children already on MCHP; allowing young adults up to age 25 to be on parents' plan; individual mandate; parity for mental health coverage.

Current legislation:

A list of bills related to health expansion was shared. Carol A. highlighted the four major initiatives, authored by Del Hammen, Health Care for All (Sen. Jones), Sen. Middleton, Gov. O'Malley. Only the first two include the \$1 tobacco tax, a source of funds for expanding Medicaid to cover adults up to 116% of Federal Poverty Level. The House will likely approve significant expansion. Senate leaders are resisting \$1 tax. Voters will need to speak up.

March 14 - Full Coalition Meeting

Pat will report on our committee and share the handout from the Feb. 9 meetings. We will encourage other coalition members to send letters and emails to legislators, urging support for key elements of expansion, including \$1 tobacco tax. After the meeting, these items can be circulated via email. Pat will also show Sarah's "Faces of the Uninsured" video and refer folks to www.healthcareforall.com. We should receive an update on the prenatal clinic at FMH (delay in opening), Dr. Menocal's practice and Community Action Agency Clinic.

Needs Assessment:

A company has been selected to do the County study. Our questions include: Will they cover mental health, immigrant health needs, substance abuse, people with disabilities? Will they ask if folks are being served by culturally competent practitioners? Bring questions to March 14 meeting.

Respectfully submitted by

Carol Antoniewicz